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President: Mr. Abuah (Nigeria)

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The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 733rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome His Excellency Mr. Sardar Aseff Ahmed Ali, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, who will address the Conference today. It was only one year ago that he addressed the Conference, and I am sure that his presence among us again, today, is a reflection of the importance attached by his Government to this forum, particularly coming as it does at a time when the Conference has reached an important crossroads in its negotiation of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Let me assure the distinguished Foreign Minister that his statement will be received with the greatest attention.

I also have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Austria, Brazil, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, China and Mongolia.

I should now like to give the floor to the first speaker on my list, the representative of Austria, Ambassador Kreid.

Mr. KREID (Austria): Mr. President, let me congratulate you on the assumption of your important function and express to you my delegation's appreciation for your commitment to our common endeavour. At the same time I should like to extend to the Secretary-General of the Conference and to his team our thanks for their valuable support of our work.

I am taking the floor today on the issue of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. Austria has, indeed, a paramount national interest in the CTBT as a major step towards a world free from nuclear weapons. My country is not only a non-nuclear-weapon State but situated in a region where, in the cold war era, the potential use of nuclear weapons was a considerable threat to its national security. Against this background, our unequivocal commitment to non-proliferation and truly comprehensive nuclear disarmament has developed early on into one of the pillars of our foreign policy. We associate ourselves fully with those countries which have, either individually or regionally, pledged themselves to remain nuclear-arms-free. It was also in the light of this non-nuclear maxim of her foreign policy that Austria has offered to host the future CTBT organization in Vienna.

Although we believe in the need for ultimate full nuclear disarmament, we are realistic enough to know that this is not an immediate option. We have taken good note of the debate, both within the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban and the Conference itself, with respect to the demand for a timebound framework for nuclear disarmament. We sympathize with the advocates of this approach because we also feel that the CTBT cannot represent the last word on the issue of nuclear arms. Yet we believe that we should not jeopardize the chance of coming to terms with nuclear testing in favour of too ambitious a concept.

We are persuaded that the conclusion of this treaty will also heighten mutual confidence and thus facilitate further concrete steps on the path towards nuclear disarmament. Indeed, the contours of a convention on a fissile material cut-off are already discernible. Needless to say that in

(Mr. Kreid, Austria)

such a context the issue of conventional armaments cannot be disregarded as we cannot envisage a world which agrees on nuclear disarmament but launches itself into a conventional arms race.

Let me now turn to the rolling text, with its brackets and unresolved passages. At this stage of the negotiations we do not believe that new and original ideas could or should be introduced. Neither do we see our role as giving good advice to CD members or reminding them of their moral obligation, because we are persuaded that they are fully pervaded by the urgency and the importance of our task.

Each delegation participating in this exercise knows how far it can go without giving up the essentials of its national position. These national positions are, of course, not the consequence of arbitrary or haphazard considerations, rather they are based on a careful and thorough analysis and they already contain far-reaching concessions. Indeed, had it been otherwise, this negotiation could never have started. It should be stressed that the test-ban negotiations so far have been a success story. After decades of frustration, in the last two years much ground has been covered, and we have finally come to the point where success seems to be within our immediate reach. If we let it slip away we might not have another chance for many years to come. This is why we need to make full use now of the available margins of manoeuvre in our negotiating positions in order to find the common ground for a final treaty text.

In the light of these considerations, we very much welcome the contribution made by Iran and Australia in providing us with a clean draft treaty text since we believe that in doing so these delegations have shown us the way out of the maze of brackets currently contained in the rolling text. In order to find a way out of this maze, we are equally satisfied to have the best possible guide in the person of the distinguished Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Jaap Ramaker, who is not only intimately acquainted with the existing pitfalls but in whose wisdom and discretion to find the appropriate compromise language we fully trust.

At this point I should like to address some of the substantial aspects of the CTBT which still await solutions. First of all, the issue of scope, which is at the very heart of the treaty. We believe that the scope should be defined in such a way as to guarantee effective compliance, which in turn means that the activities banned need to be adequately verifiable. Austria is therefore inclined to go along with the Australian model treaty text language on the zero-yield option. We appreciate that this very option has already been endorsed by some of the nuclear-weapon States and that all but one of them have decided to respect a moratorium on tests until the entry into force of the CTBT. Austria would appeal to China as the only country which still intends to proceed with nuclear-weapon test explosions to reconsider its position and to adhere to such a moratorium.

In any event the prohibition would need to include so-called "peaceful nuclear explosions". In view of the environmental and health consequences of all nuclear activities and in particular explosions, we oppose PNEs for

(Mr. Kreid, Austria)

reasons of principle. Such a provision would weaken the treaty to an unacceptable degree. Ambiguities as to their peaceful or military use would be inevitable and verification could become highly controversial.

In supporting the Australian text on scope we are ready to accept a certain degree of flexibility with regard to such aspects as preparations, hydronuclear experiments, other experiments and simulations which are beyond the purview of reasonable verification. To those who suggest that we need an absolutely "watertight" text, we would answer that they should not underestimate the normative faculties of the treaty. Not only will non-compliance elicit strong reactions by the other States parties to the treaty, but public opinion, which in this context must be regarded as a strong and growing influence, especially in the form of NGO activities, will certainly react with great sensitivity to activities which might not be formally banned under the treaty but could be considered to be incompatible with its spirit.

Having reviewed the options now available in the rolling text on the article on entry into force, Austria has a clear preference for a simple numerical formula whereby the number of 40 ratifications required seems to be a reasonable one. In adopting such a formula we could allay the fears of some delegations that the treaty would be held hostage by one or more States whose ratification is made a prerequisite for entry into force. It is an undeniable fact that we cannot compel any country to join the treaty if there is no, or insufficient, political will to do so. On the other hand, the fact that the negotiation of this treaty counts with the active involvement and support of all nuclear-weapon Powers can be interpreted as an indication of their interest in joining it. At any rate, we believe that we ought to provide for an arrangement which will lead to early entry into force of the treaty even if some important countries might be lagging behind for various reasons.

Let me mention in this context that we drew the attention of delegations to the possibility of provisional application. This proposal was made last June and is contained in working paper CD/NTB/WP.242. Recently, we had an opportunity to elaborate on this proposal in a non-paper, taking into account the remarks that had been made by other delegations on our last year's initiative.

Let me be very clear. We would, as I just mentioned, prefer the adoption of a simple numerical formula, but we believe that in the absence of such an agreement, the procedure of provisional application constitutes an alternative to the idea of the so-called waiver conference which is worth considering for various reasons. First of all, it would not affect in any way the formal conditions set forth in the treaty for its entry into force, whereas the waiver construction requires that exceptions be made. Secondly, the provisional application would serve only as a temporary measure until the formal requirements for entry into force have been fulfilled. Once these formal requirements are fulfilled the provisional application would end. Thirdly, and this could turn out to be very useful, the figure of provisional application as such is not limited to the criteria laid down in the article on entry into force. It could, with the necessary amendments, also provide a legal framework for the adoption of decisions which need to be taken within

(Mr. Kreid, Austria)

the first years after signature, such as in connection with the establishment of the international monitoring system, that is, at a time when the treaty will most certainly not have entered into force. Summing it up, the advantage of this approach is that it is flexible and reversible and that it permits us to address situations which might emerge in the future but which cannot be anticipated now.

Let me now touch upon some of the more technical problems of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty still waiting for settlement. It should be stated very clearly that a treaty of such significance lacking an effective and comprehensive verification regime would be, as it were, without bite. How difficult it is to add even modest verification regulations later on, we are just now witnessing with regard to the Biological Weapons Convention and the 1980 United Nations Conventional Weapons Convention. We therefore firmly believe that an effective verification system must be part and parcel of the final agreement.

The technical key components of the future verification regime are the international monitoring system with its four monitoring techniques and the international data centre, the task of which will be to provide States parties with well-defined standardized products and services, such as a daily standard event bulletin, a daily standard event list and standard event screening. Noble gas monitoring should be part of the radionuclide component of the IMS as noble gases might, under certain circumstances, be the only information carrier leaving the scene of a clandestine nuclear test. At the same time Austria is not in favour of including either satellite monitoring or electromagnetic pulse observation in the IMS in view of the considerable additional costs this would entail.

With reference to radionuclide technology, I am pleased to announce that Austria is presently taking steps to put at the disposal of the CTBT organization the laboratory in Seibersdorf. The necessary supplementary data for the inclusion of this facility in the table of primary laboratories attached to the draft protocol on verification will be made available by my delegation to the distinguished Friend of the Chair on IMS in the near future.

The on-site inspection problem is the most daunting and bewildering on our agenda. Let me briefly elaborate on it. First of all, only States parties should be entitled to ask for an on-site inspection when suspicion arises. "Free riding" should not be permitted. Secondly, the process of clarification of suspicious events should, because of the importance of time-critical phenomena, not delay the preparation of an on-site inspection. Clarification should take place in parallel and need not necessarily be concluded before the inspection is carried out. Thirdly, national technical means should not, a priori, be disavowed as they can be very valid in detecting a suspicious event. At the same time we recognize and accept the existing reservations against this concept. We therefore consider the compromise proposal put forward by France as very attractive: to apply the so-called red light approach in case of an IMS and NTM trigger in order to be consistent with time-critical elements; and to rely on the green light approach when national technical means are the only basis for the OSI request. This approach would make sure that the treaty and its operation respect the

(Mr. Kreid, Austria)

overriding principle of procedural non-discrimination against States parties which have no such means at their disposal but against whom information based on national technical means is being used in the proceedings.

Fourthly, as to abusive triggering of on-site inspections, this is not only a question of wasting money since setting in motion the whole inspection mechanism is a very costly matter at the expense of all States parties. There is an additional non-monetary aspect since abusive triggering could considerably harm the treaty's, and its organization's, credibility. Therefore abuses of the OSI procedure should be put under severe sanctions, such as payment of compensation of all costs caused, suspension of the right to request an on-site inspection for a certain period of time, as well as suspension of the right to serve on the Executive Council for a time to be determined.

Because of its comprehensive tasks, the CTBT organization will be of a very special nature. The great amount of know-how and technology involved in order for it to be able to carry out its verification functions through a worldwide international monitoring system opens up new perspectives of global cooperation. Let me assure you that Austria, as the potential host country of this organization, is ready to take all the necessary steps in order to guarantee to the CTBT organization appropriate working conditions.

Before concluding, let me briefly touch upon the issue of membership. Two weeks ago we had the honour to listen to the very pertinent thoughts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the urgency for the CD to conclude the CTBT this year and on the necessity for the CD to be successful. The Secretary-General went on to say that the political and geographical balance of the CD's membership and the special arrangements which have been made to allow more than 50 non-member States to participate in it make the Conference a forum for negotiation "that is unique of its kind and guarantees that all viewpoints will be heard". This may be so, but we still believe that it is not sufficient to be heard. We feel that the CD, as an institution, is at odds with the international political culture of allowing sovereign States to participate in the decision-making process on matters which affect their immediate national interests: it appears as an anachronism that such important treaties as the Chemical Weapons Convention and the CTBT, which are destined for universal adherence, are being or have been negotiated by a small group of countries on behalf of all States. A decision on expansion is overdue.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Austria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Lafer.

Mr. LAFER (Brazil): May I begin by expressing to you, Mr. President, the satisfaction I have in taking the floor this morning under your presidency of the Conference on Disarmament? The diplomatic experience and the ability you have displayed since assuming this incumbency provide us an assurance of skilful and able guidance through trying times still ahead. You can count on the Brazilian delegation for full cooperation and support in your endeavours.

(Mr. Lafer, Brazil)

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank your predecessors, Ambassadors Jaap Ramaker of the Netherlands and U Aye of Myanmar, for their untiring efforts in dealing with the difficult issues before the Conference.

Nuclear-weapon tests were as sadly characteristic of the cold war years as were soaring military budgets and ever-growing and increasingly sophisticated nuclear arsenals. As an activity inextricably linked to the perverse logic of nuclear weapons improvement and stockpiling, nuclear tests are today perceived as disturbing remnants of a bygone era. The reaction to the latest tests drove home the point that the current international political environment, as well as important constituencies within States, no longer tolerate them. In the next few months, the challenge for the Conference on Disarmament and for all those States involved in the CTBT negotiations is to legally and definitively make clear that nuclear tests are a thing of the past.

As many other States represented around this table and in this hall, Brazil has been calling for a comprehensive nuclear test ban for nearly four decades. We did so during all those years, as we do now, because we believe in the intrinsic value of such a treaty both as creating an impediment with regard to the perfecting and development of nuclear weapons, and as a necessary and fundamental step in the process of nuclear disarmament.

The non-proliferation dimension of a CTBT is as significant as it is unprecedented. A truly comprehensive, true-zero ban should in effect bar nuclear weapons development and qualitative improvement. It is doubtless a refreshing prospect to be able to close the door on the possibility of one day having to deal with such things as a "nuclear shotgun", an enhanced-electromagnetic pulse or radiation weapon, or even a microwave weapon, as pointed out in this room last January by United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) Director John Holum. But it is also important to place the CTBT in its proper context with regard to nuclear disarmament. It is our view that the CTBT's impact will inevitably transcend the prohibition it imposes on testing, giving it an even more meaningful and far-reaching raison d'être. By banning an activity essential for carrying on with the development and improvement of nuclear weapons, the CTBT is rightly looked on by many as an essential step in the process of bringing the reversal of the nuclear arms race to its logical conclusion: elimination of nuclear weapons at the earliest possible time under a multilateral process of nuclear disarmament. This aspiration should form part of the treaty itself.

One of the most welcome spin-offs of the end of the cold war has been a trend towards smaller nuclear arsenals on the part of the nuclear-weapon States, as a result of both bilateral and unilateral actions, some of which have taken place in the first months of this year: in January, ratification of the START II treaty by the United States, hopefully soon to be followed by the Russian Federation; last month, the announcement by the French Government of its decision to close all land-based nuclear operations as well as French Pacific test sites. Other related positive developments should also be mentioned: the end of production of fissile material announced by the United States, the United Kingdom and France, and, just a few days ago,

(Mr. Lafer, Brazil)

on 25 March, the signature by those three countries of the Rarotonga Treaty protocols, through which they pledge to respect that area of the world as a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

There can be no denying the importance of measures such as these and of their bearing on international peace and security. But precisely because of this global impact, because every State, nuclear or non-nuclear, has a stake in their outcome, measures relating to nuclear disarmament should be addressed within the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body. As what Immanuel Kant would call an "encompassing reason of humanity", nuclear disarmament pertains to all States, great and small.

Agreement on the immediate establishment by the CD of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, a decision long sought by my country and shared by the Group of 21 and by others in this hall, would, for its part, signal readiness on the part of nuclear weapon arsenal holders to start discussing ways and means for their reduction with other concerned members of the international community. There would be no lack of material for such a committee to discuss. Besides effectively engaging the international community in a nuclear disarmament effort, the committee could, among other functions, examine suggestions such as a negotiated and verifiable agreement to ban the future production of nuclear weapons, as put forward by New Zealand; the establishment of a phased programme for progressive reduction of nuclear weapon stockpiles, as articulated by India; as well as the relevant proposals which should be forthcoming from the Canberra Commission. A concrete role by the CD on nuclear disarmament would, moreover, go a long way in reassuring all States that the step represented by the CTBT does not fall exclusively within the purview of principles and objectives of treaties to which not all States are parties, but rather that such a step is firmly embedded in a systematic and determined pursuit to rid the world of nuclear weapons undertaken by the Conference on Disarmament.

To reflect on the true role of the Conference as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body is also to realize how overdue the question of its expansion has become. Brazil wholeheartedly supported the decision on expansion adopted last September (CD/1356), and could agree to its immediate implementation. We hope general agreement can soon be reached on the date on which the 23 States referred to therein will all assume together membership of the Conference.

As to the recurring question of non-governmental organizations and their relationship with the CD, Brazil is in favour of them playing a more active and direct role in the work of the Conference. As I expressed in a previous statement in this plenary on 14 September last year, it seems to us unjustifiable that NGOs find themselves excluded from the activities of the CD.

One week from today the CTBT Ad Hoc Committee, already working inter-sessionally, will adjourn until early May. The intervening four weeks will be a crucial time for capitals to assess the work done so far and to make the decisions that are needed for the Committee to be able to finalize its work by the end of the second part of this year's CD session. This would

(Mr. Lafer, Brazil)

enable the Conference to live up to the international community's expectation, as reflected in United Nations General Assembly resolution 50/65, and have a treaty ready for signature by the outset of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. For such a tight calendar to be kept, negotiations will have to move into an end-game phase in May/June, and needed trade-offs would have to take place then. Recently, Iran and Australia have shown that to have a workable treaty in 1996 is a viable proposition, provided the political will is there to give life to it. The Ad Hoc Committee Chairman, Ambassador Jaap Ramaker, has a critical role to play at this juncture. We are confident in his wisdom and judgement and offer him all our support in the crucial task that lies ahead. For its part, Brazil will continue to work for solutions which may command general acceptance and thus help achieve a universal treaty in the time-frame set by the General Assembly. We have already been doing our utmost in attempting to accommodate all reasonable concerns and in contributing to a meaningful and effective treaty text, and will continue to do so.

I will briefly touch upon some of the major issues still pending. Over a year ago, Brazil gave its support to the scope formulation put forward by Australia in working paper CD/NTB/WP.222. The solid and still growing support that text enjoys today clearly shows a large body of opinion in favour of a truly comprehensive, zero-yield ban on any nuclear-weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion, without exceptions or conditions. We hope this trend widens to encompass all States participating in the negotiations.

As to the thorny issue of entry into force, our view is that provisions should reflect a balance between two types of considerations. On the one hand, the formulation should avoid discriminatory elements, such as explicitly naming the five nuclear-weapon States. Other the other, it should take into account the fact that without the participation of countries that have the capacity to test, the CTBT would in fact be devoid of real value. Combining a certain number of States with a waiver provision may offer a solution. We look forward to exploring possibilities on this topic in the coming weeks under the guidance of Ambassador Antonio de Icaza.

Another issue central to the negotiations is the composition of the Executive Council. We consider Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi's first "non-paper" on the subject a useful basis for discussion and thank him for that effort. We have conveyed our comments to him, which I would like to summarize here. We are in agreement with the principles that no State party should be excluded from the Executive Council and that at least 30 per cent of seats in each region should be filled according to certain criteria. The CTBT organization should be in a position to objectively determine to what extent each State party fulfils such criteria, whose order of priority would best be established in the treaty itself. The creative suggestion of establishing six regional groups as a middle ground between the IAEA formula and the usual United Nations geographical distribution is worth pursuing further. In a 45-member Executive Council, the Latin American and Caribbean region must at least maintain the same numerical proportion it enjoys with regard to the total number of States in the world, which means eight Council seats, not seven.

(Mr. Lafer, Brazil)

We will also be actively seeking solutions in other important areas of the treaty, such as on-site inspections and the means for triggering them; the international data centre and the level and extent of analysis done there; and ways and means to reach agreement with regard to funding the international monitoring system and the CTBT organization.

We have waited many years for a CTBT. It looks as though the opportunity for it to become a reality is finally within our grasp. Let us make the most of the time ahead of us and live up to the international community's expectations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now have the honour to give the floor to the distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Sardar Aseff Ahmed Ali, to deliver his important communication to us.

Mr. SADAR ASEFF AHMED ALI (Pakistan): It is a pleasure to be with you once again in the Conference on Disarmament. You are ending the first part of your session at a crucial juncture in your negotiation of the comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT). It is a very happy augury that, at this critical moment, an able and skilled diplomat from friendly Nigeria is presiding over the Conference's proceedings. We are confident that you will contribute in no small measure to the success of the CD's endeavours.

At the start of our session this year, there were doubts whether we would even be able to resume our negotiations. Now there is a sense of confidence that, notwithstanding over 1,200 brackets in the "rolling text", the CD will conclude the CTBT in the near future. We look forward to the text which will be put forward later today by the very able Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee. Like the Iranian and the Australian texts, this will no doubt provide most useful indicators of the possibilities for compromise on various outstanding issues.

The success of our negotiations is, however, not yet a foregone conclusion. More significant than the thousand and one brackets are those few important issues on which agreement remains to be achieved. I wish to review Pakistan's position on these issues today.

First, we must evolve a clear and genuine consensus on the scope of the CTBT. A convergence appears to have developed around the Australian formulation to prohibit all nuclear-test explosions. Yet, there are doubts whether this formulation will ensure that the ban on testing will be truly comprehensive and that it will serve the objective of halting the qualitative development of nuclear weapons.

To move towards a genuine consensus, it will be necessary to elaborate, in some way, that the treaty will ban all nuclear testing at any threshold. To this end, the concept of a "zero-yield" ban needs to be more clearly explained, understood and accepted by all States. We would not be satisfied with a separate agreement on this issue between the five nuclear-weapon States, outside the treat negotiations.

(Mr. Sadar Aseff Ahmed Ali, Pakistan)

Simultaneously, Pakistan is concerned that some nuclear-weapon States do not appear to be committed to the objective of halting the qualitative development of nuclear weapons. For the non-nuclear-weapon States, the prime attraction of the CTBT has been that it will stop vertical proliferation - in other words, the qualitative development of new nuclear weapons and nuclear-weapon systems. Despite statements made here by senior officials of some nuclear-weapon States, we are now given to understand that halting the qualitative development of nuclear weapons cannot be an explicit objective or purpose of the CTBT.

This is a matter of great concern to Pakistan. The CTBT is supposed to be a first step in the process of nuclear disarmament. If the CTBT does not in fact prevent nuclear-weapon States from developing new systems of nuclear weapons, there will be no assurance that, in an action-reaction sequence, the world will once again not witness a new nuclear arms race. If the treaty does not halt the qualitative development of nuclear weapons, it will not contribute in any significant way to the goal of nuclear disarmament. We will therefore continue to seek an adequate and legally binding commitment to halting the qualitative development of nuclear weapons.

Pakistan and other non-aligned countries have also sought explicit commitments in the CTBT on nuclear disarmament. We are most disappointed that this desire has been brushed aside by the nuclear-weapon States so far. Pakistan will continue to press for a commitment to nuclear disarmament in the CTBT.

We have not endorsed the proposal which would make the treaty's realization dependent on the commitment of the nuclear Powers to nuclear disarmament within a specific time-frame. But we strongly support the position taken by the Group of 21 in document CD/1388. The Group of 21 has proposed that the Conference on Disarmament "establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to commence negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time". It has further proposed that "the negotiations in the framework of this ad hoc committee should commence immediately after the conclusion of the comprehensive-test-ban-treaty negotiations in 1996".

If the world believes that the CTBT represents the first step towards nuclear disarmament, it is time for the CD to identify and propose subsequent steps which are required to promote nuclear disarmament and the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. The resistance of some nuclear-weapon States to this reasonable proposition creates doubts and suspicions regarding their professed commitment to nuclear disarmament. We sincerely urge these States to respond to the historic opportunities that are available today and to take the steps necessary to create a future for our world free of nuclear weapons.

The opening of negotiations on nuclear disarmament will respond to the long-standing aspiration of the world community. It would also facilitate acceptance of the CTBT by all States and thus ensure its early entry into force.

(Mr. Sadar Aseff Ahmed Ali, Pakistan)

The provisions on "entry into force" in the CTBT will be critical for its success. To be effective a test ban must be universal. We must not contemplate a solution where one or more States capable of conducting nuclear explosions are not party to the treaty. Pakistan's signature and adherence to the CTBT will be dependent on our confidence that all nuclear-weapons States and nuclear-capable States will join the treaty.

The third area in the CTBT negotiations where clear decisions are needed quickly is the question of on-site inspections (OSI) and possible use of national technical means (NTMs). We are most concerned about some of the proposals advanced on these issues.

First, the use of NTMs as a "trigger" for OSI would allow the use of information which could be subjective, selective and unreliable. The international monitoring system (IMS) which is to be established at great cost and with the participation of all parties, should constitute the backbone of CTBT verification. It is information gained through the IMS which should provide the basis for initiating an OSI, whenever such inspections are necessary.

Second, we will continue to insist that an OSI must be approved by the Executive Council of the future CTBT organization. This is the only way to ensure that such politically sensitive decisions are taken collectively after due care and consideration thus reducing the possibilities of selectivity and abuse.

Third, for much the same reasons, the authority to sit in judgement on matters regarding compliance with the treaty must also be vested in the Executive Council and not rest with individual States parties. It is the collective political organs of the organization which should have the responsibility to oversee the operation of the treaty to ensure its effective implementation. We should not countenance any mechanism which bypasses the political and technical role of the CTBT organization.

We are aware that certain bilateral and regional arms control treaties allow the use of NTMs for purposes of verification. The acceptance of these provisions is based on the matching national capabilities of the participating countries. This provides a built-in safeguard against abuse. On the other hand, multilateral treaties, which seek universal adherence, require procedures that are transparent, which offer equal access to all parties, and which ensure non-discrimination in the application of politically sensitive instruments for treaty verification.

These views are shared by other delegations. We hope that, in the formulation of the revised proposals on OSI, these views will be fully taken into account. Our historical experience of undue harassment makes Pakistan specially sensitive to issues concerning the possible misuse of on-site inspections. We believe our concerns can be accommodated without in any way diminishing the credibility of the CTBT's verification regime.

Pakistan looks forward to the early conclusion of the CTBT. We have supported this goal for over 30 years. We are not about to change our mind

(Mr. Sadar Aseff Ahmed Ali, Pakistan)

now that the moment of truth is here. Pakistan continues to believe that the CTBT will be good for the world and it will be good for our region. It will realize the aims of the regional test ban which Pakistan had proposed for South Asia in 1987.

We in Pakistan remain concerned that there could be another nuclear test across our border. This could lead to a grave situation and seriously compromise prospects for non-proliferation. We continue to look for categorical assurances from India against such an event. Instead we have heard statements asserting that India will "keep its nuclear options open". We hope, nevertheless, that a positive response will come from Prime Minister Rao to Prime Minister Bhutto's proposal to discuss a nuclear-weapons-free future for our countries.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan for his important statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Slovenia, Ambassador Bebler.

Mr. BEBLER (Slovenia): May I, first of all, join the previous speakers who addressed to the President, to his predecessors, to the Secretary-General and to the hard-working staff of the Conference on Disarmament, their compliments and assurances of full cooperation?

Now, let me turn to some questions related to the comprehensive test-ban treaty and to the future CTBT organization. The Republic of Slovenia wholeheartedly advocates the conclusion in 1996 of an effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (CTBT). This international compact, concluded without conditions related to other arms control and disarmament issues and universal in scope, should impose a global ban on all nuclear explosions and be effective as soon as possible.

We fully support the establishment of the CTBT organization in Vienna, co-located with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other organizations in the Vienna International Centre. The Agency has a proven capacity and its secretariat estimated that considerable savings in administrative and management services, in the start-up time and costs for the CTBT organization could be obtained if the Agency is entrusted with rendering these services to the CTBT organization as part of its regular functioning.

We are now witnessing, also in Geneva, a dire financial crisis in the United Nations system due mostly to the huge sums of unpaid membership dues. Under these conditions it would be highly inappropriate to duplicate the already existing IAEA facilities and to waste precious resources on building up highly specialized expertise and very expensive installations separate from IAEA. We think that IAEA ought to be placed in a similar position toward the CTBT organization as the United Nations Centre for Human Rights has toward several human rights treaties monitoring bodies. On the basis of this analogy, the Agency would provide all necessary services to the Conference and the Executive Council of the organization, the CTBT technical secretariat would operate from within the Agency and the international monitoring system would be developed in such a way as to make full use of the existing Agency

(Mr. Bebler, Slovenia)

capabilities. Such arrangements would not only be logical but would provide for the right combination of cost-effectiveness and organizational efficiency. While thoroughly assuring the attainment of the desired lofty goals of banning for ever all nuclear explosions and, hopefully, putting brakes on the qualitative development of nuclear weapons, the new CTBT organization would not unduly financially burden its member States.

I think that it would be worthwhile if a group of interested Ambassadors visits IAEA and the Vienna International Centre, inquires about the most practical arrangements for the CTBT organization and reports back to the Conference on Disarmament.

Slovenia has some expertise and facilities relevant for the CTBT organization. I hope that we shall be able to offer to the new international monitoring system our Ljubljana seismological station which already possesses the three-component capacity and is being upgraded to an array. However for reasons of equity we feel that a share of the contribution credit in each member State's assessed obligation toward the organization ought to be limited for instance, to a half. The cost of running the organization and particularly the international monitoring system should not fall too heavily on the non-nuclear States who do not possess first-grade nuclear detection facilities.

My country is number three on the honour roll of contributions to the United Nations regular budget in 1996. We certainly intend to fully and timely discharge our international obligations also in the future and also to the new CTBT organization. This is why we are concerned about appropriate arrangements related to the CTBT organization, about the prevention of costly waste and the possible creation of superfluous bureaucratic bodies.

Let me quote in this respect the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Ms. Madeleine Albright stated only several months ago: "Unfortunately, we have allowed a system to develop ... in which bureaucratic turf is divided and subdivided again, so that each entity can claim a unique role, but few can operate successfully without help from others. This results, in turn, in the creation of yet more entities to coordinate among those already in existence ... A fundamental question ... concerns the will and ability of Member States to pay for UN activities. Many Member Governments are behind in their payments to the UN regular budget, including my own ... Our goal should be a UN system that is more productive for all its members, East, West, North and South. Nations aspiring to expand their economies don't need more UN bureaucrats. That's why we want a United Nations that talks less and produces more; a United Nations that spends less on salaries, stationery and ceremonies and more on services that save and enrich people's lives."

In the spirit expressed by Ambassador Albright I wish to express my belief that the Conference on Disarmament should continue to investigate the option originally proposed by the United States of America that IAEA perform all secretariat functions of the new CTBT organization.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Slovenia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Czech Republic, Mr. Venera.

Mr. VENERA (Czech Republic): Mr. President, I congratulate you on behalf of the Czech delegation on your presiding over the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of our full support. As a relatively long period of time has elapsed since I previously addressed this forum, I would also like to thank all your predecessors in this post who, especially over the past two years, have exerted great efforts to cope with the complex questions concerning both the Conference agenda and the enlargement of its membership. On this occasion, I would also like to welcome the representatives of member and non-member countries who have recently assumed their posts in Geneva and my delegation is looking forward to fruitful cooperation with them.

The Czech Republic continues on the path to the country's full integration in the European economic and Euro-Atlantic security structures. This process reflects the willingness and readiness of the Czech Republic to share the advantages of a common market but also responsibilities for its protection and promotion of democracy. It is based on the legitimate expression of sovereignty of the Czech Republic and the achievement of the goal we have set ourselves is by no means directed against any country. On the contrary, we are convinced that the fulfilment of our efforts will contribute to the strengthening of security and stability not only in central but in the whole of Europe. To this end, we pay a lot of attention to questions of arms control and disarmament as well as to those concerning international security including the security of our own country.

The Czech Republic highly appreciates the efforts exerted by the Conference on Disarmament in 1994 and 1995 within the negotiations on the comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT) and its current endeavour to accomplish this work. We strongly support a universal, transparent and effectively verifiable treaty of a non-discriminatory character, implying identical rights and obligations for all States parties. We support the true-zero-yield option and reject calls for so-called peaceful nuclear explosions with regard to their uselessness and above all with regard to their lack of credibility.

In our opinion it is important to have an absolutely transparent verification system, open to all States parties to the treaty. We regard the currently proposed system, based on four technologies (seismology, hydroacoustics, infrasound and radionuclide monitoring) combined with on-site inspections, as well balanced and sufficient for deterring any potential violator to the treaty. This is why we support accepting the package elaborated by experts, in particular by the Group of Scientific Experts (GSE), without delay, as we consider this very technology of primary importance within the verification system. The Czech Republic highly appreciates the work done by the GSE and supports the current global technical test, GSETT-3. The Czech Republic has been participating actively in the work of the GSE and participates in GSETT-3 by providing data from its seismological station. We understand that the future verification system can be effective only when it is a truly cooperative undertaking with true global coverage. We are thus prepared to cooperate with the future CTBT organization and provide seismic

(Mr. Venera, Czech Republic)

data to the international monitoring system (IMS) from the station already used in GSETT-3. It is clear that the key role in the verification system will be played by the international data centre (IDC) to be established as a part of the future CTBT organization. The IDC should be responsible not only for data collection and data exchange, but also for efficient data processing. This should guarantee full access for all States parties to the relevant information. The right to decide about an on-site inspection should then be reserved for the CTBTO Executive Council. The IDC or the CTBT organization's technical secretariat should not be making any final judgement on the character of any event detected. However, the IDC should be able to provide the States parties with all parameters characterizing the event under judgement. The IDC will have to prove its ability to support the Executive Council negotiations in all scientific and technical aspects and to keep the highest standards based on the most advanced States' levels. To do so, the IDC will have to be capable to work also with data provided by national technical means, once the Executive Council accepts them for analysis of any ambiguous event.

As far as the future CTBT organization is concerned, our preference is for an organization that would be in the position to act independently. We support the candidacy of Vienna and hope that all the outstanding questions will be settled as soon as possible and thus create a basis for effective and also cost-efficient work of the organization.

Like all the international community we, too, wish and hope that the text of the treaty will be finalized in Geneva by the end of June 1996 and that the treaty will be submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly for signature at its fifty-first session so that it could enter into force as soon as possible.

The Czech Republic regards complete elimination of nuclear weapons as an ultimate goal of the Conference on Disarmament. We are however convinced that this goal may be attained only by stages within general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. The first steps in this direction have already been taken: we have the START I and START II bilateral treaties concluded between the United States and the Russian Federation, the unilateral decisions by the United States and France to halt the production of fissile materials for military purposes, the observance of the moratorium on nuclear testing by the United States, the United Kingdom, the Russian Federation, being recently rejoined by France, as well as the extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty for an indefinite period. Another step would be the comprehensive test-ban treaty which I have already mentioned. The irony of fate is that if the negotiations on the treaty are completed this year, the Conference on Disarmament will, judging by the present state of affairs, lose the only item on its agenda. This is why we appeal to all member States to make efforts to reach a consensus on the need to include in the agenda another step towards nuclear disarmament, that is, the conclusion of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for military purposes ("cut-off").

(Mr. Venera, Czech Republic)

There is no doubt that apart from nuclear weapons, it is chemical weapons which belong to the most dangerous means of waging war. Their relatively cheaper production in comparison with nuclear weapons increases the tremendous risk of their future proliferation and potential use. It was therefore essential that efforts of the international community to eliminate this category of weapons of mass destruction culminated in the finalization of the text of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons at the 1992 Conference on Disarmament.

The Czech Republic has never possessed or produced chemical weapons and neither have they ever been deployed on its territory. The humane idea of their complete ban and elimination has always had our full support. A practical expression of this support was the signing of the Convention in January 1993, its approval by the Government and the Parliament of the Czech Republic last year, its ratification by the President of the Republic in February this year and the deposition of the instruments of ratification with the United Nations Secretary-General on 6 March 1996, thus becoming the forty-eighth State to do so. The national bill together with the implementation decrees is expected to be approved by the Parliament in the first half of this year. Under the Convention, the Czech Republic is involved in a whole series of activities, through seminars, the participation of Czech research institutes in comparison test programmes or the training of inspectors. We sincerely wish the Convention to become a universal internationally binding document as soon as possible, opening a way for early establishment of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The Czech Republic attaches great importance also to the prohibition, elimination and non-proliferation of biological and toxin weapons. It regards the respective Convention as a binding international document and although it neither possesses nor develops any kind of biological weapons, it has been annually providing all necessary data in the form of non-mandatory declarations.

At the same time the Czech Republic is well aware that the Biological Weapons Convention does not reflect the current international relations and developments, lacking at the same time an effective verification system. There are still attempts to obtain sophisticated technologies which create the danger of their misuse for the production of this type of weapons. It is therefore our view that all available international forums should be used for strengthening the Convention and the mechanisms of non-proliferation of biological and toxin weapons. In this connection we are convinced that the prepared control measures, which we fully support, will be adopted by the Convention evaluation conference to be held towards the end of this year.

The Czech Republic shares the view of the majority of the States parties that the elaboration, adoption and implementation of the verification protocol to the Convention will be the best way of solving the problem and of eliminating once and for all time this category of weapons of mass destruction.

(Mr. Venera, Czech Republic)

The so far relatively meagre achievements in the implementation of the 1980 Inhumane Weapons Convention confirm the grounds for the views, also shared by the Czech Republic, that the Convention, and in particular its Protocol II, ought to be strengthened and equipped with an effective control mechanism. It is regrettable that this has not been done already at the first session of the Review Conference in Vienna in October 1995, where the military aspects apparently prevailed over the humanitarian ones.

Should the Convention become an effective international treaty it is equally important to make it universal. Therefore we all should try hard to encourage countries, both mine producers and those mine-stricken, to become active States parties to the Convention.

The Czech Republic is among the countries which have already taken practical steps to reduce the use of anti-personnel land-mines. These include the declaration of a three-year moratorium on the export of all types of anti-personnel land-mines in 1994 as well as the readiness to further extend the moratorium after its expiry in 1997. Within the solution of this global problem, the Czech Republic has also decided to destroy all its stockpiles of undetectable mines of the said type.

I cannot fail to address also one of the neuralgic points on the agenda of our Conference, that is, expansion of membership. Not to speak of the United Nations General Assembly resolutions which are quite explicit on this point, we cannot but agree with those who voiced even in this forum the view that the current membership has long ago ceased to reflect the realities and needs of the world today. The effectiveness of international treaties on arms control and disarmament, for which this Conference is the only negotiating body, increases in parallel to the growing universality of their adoption. Should the achievement of such universality be the ultimate objective, the negotiating process cannot be in the hands of a chosen few, with many others deprived of the possibility to "make their case" in decision-making on these vital issues.

The first part of this year's session is drawing towards its end, offering an opportune moment for making a balance sheet. Unfortunately, developments have mercilessly proved that the proposal by the former Special Coordinator of 1993 was unacceptable, so much the less its adoption last year in the form of the decision contained in CD/1356. Its implementation is now totally and hopelessly deadlocked, preventing not only the admission of the 22 "innocent" candidates from G-23, but also the admission of 13 candidates in the subsequent stage. If member States genuinely wish that the Conference should not remain an élite club, they should submit as soon as possible a draft proposal on how to cope with the present situation. So far, there exists only one such proposal which has not however equally been accepted. I have in mind document CD/1362 submitted by the United States delegation on 22 September 1995. We recommend that the proposal should be discussed in the plenary session of the Conference and each delegation should clearly and unequivocally express its opinion. The adoption of the proposal would at the

(Mr. Venera, Czech Republic)

same time solve the problem of succession of the Slovak Republic in respect of former Czechoslovakia, although we still hold the view that this particular question is in fact another outstanding debt of the Conference not linked to the question of expansion.

The Czech delegation and I personally believe that the year 1996 will be a significant milestone in the history of the Conference, marking the successful completion of CTBT talks as well as the overcoming of the crisis in understanding concerning the agenda and membership. The Czech Republic wishes to contribute to achieving this aim to the best of its abilities and using the capacities provided to it for this purpose.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Czech Republic for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of China, Ambassador Sha.

Mr. SHA (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, may I begin first by warmly congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament? The Chinese delegation is convinced that with your outstanding ability and rich experience in multilateral diplomacy you are sure to guide this Conference to success. I would like to assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation. I also wish to take this opportunity to express my thanks to your predecessor Ambassador Ramaker of the Netherlands for his contribution to the work of the CD.

The CTBT negotiations have entered their third year. In accordance with the relevant resolution of the General Assembly we are required to conclude a treaty as soon as possible this year. People are watching with great interest to see whether the CD can live up to the expectations of the international community and fulfil its mandate within the time-frame specified in the General Assembly resolution. Before the end of the first part of this year's session I would like to explain the position of the Chinese delegation on some of the important issues in the CTBT negotiations.

We all agree that the current negotiations are not conducted in a vacuum but are influenced invariably by the developments in the international situation as a whole. In fact, the initiation and progress of the negotiations and the future signing, ratification and entry into force of the treaty are all closely linked to the changes in the international situation. Since the end of the cold war and especially in the 1990s the international situation has undergone drastic changes. Today the world is still in the process of complex and profound changes with the overall trend moving towards relaxation. The bipolar system has come to an end together with the confrontation between the Eastern and Western blocs and the transition towards multipolarity has accelerated. A new world structure is taking shape. The world wants peace, countries need stability, economies need development and mankind desires progress. This has become the main theme in the world today and this trend will last for quite some time in the future. It is in such an international environment that the nuclear super-Powers have embarked on the path of nuclear arms reduction, ensuring the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It is against the same backdrop that the CTBT negotiations have been initiated, and are now

(Mr. Sha, China)

progressing successfully. It is safe to say that the above-mentioned important developments in the field of arms control and disarmament are just a natural result of the development and changes in the international situation. Proceeding from its analysis and understanding of the international situation, China believes that, as long as all the parties concerned show enough political will and the necessary flexibility in the negotiations, it is possible to achieve the objective of concluding a treaty this year.

At present, the 1.2 billion Chinese people are concentrating on modernization with full confidence. China needs a long-term peaceful and tranquil international environment and has been making every effort to achieve this end. In the past two years and more, the Chinese delegation, under instructions from the Chinese Government, has been participating in the CTBT negotiations in a positive, serious and responsible manner. This is an aspect of our comprehensive effort. The Chinese delegation hopes to conclude no later than 1996 a good CTBT which will genuinely prohibit all nuclear-weapon test explosions and which will be universal and internationally and effectively verifiable so as to promote international peace and security.

Since the beginning of this part of the CD session and as the CTBT negotiations progress, countries participating in the negotiations have deepened their debate and understanding of the relationship between the CTBT and nuclear disarmament. Since this question bears on how such a relationship should be reflected in the treaty, the Chinese delegation regards this debate as normal and necessary. It is our sincere hope that a common understanding can be reached on this issue at an early date, thus accelerating the negotiations. The Chinese delegation understands and sympathizes with the demand of a large number of non-nuclear-weapon States for nuclear disarmament within a time-bound framework. China has always stood for the early and complete elimination of nuclear weapons and has put forward a package of proposals for this purpose at the United Nations General Assembly. We have always regarded the CTBT as an important step towards the elimination of nuclear weapons, because a treaty like this, for the first time banning all nuclear-weapon test explosions in the world in the form of an international legal instrument, will certainly promote the process of nuclear disarmament and lay the groundwork for the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons. In the meantime, we should note that the advent and development of nuclear weapons has been a lengthy historical process. So likewise the complete elimination of such weapons will also take some time. The Chinese delegation is of the view that the specific time-frame for nuclear disarmament should be decided within the context of negotiations on a convention banning nuclear weapons. I wish to emphasize here once again that the indefinite extension of the NPT and the indefinite validity of the CTBT must in no way be interpreted so as to perpetuate the privileged status of the nuclear-weapon States in possessing nuclear weapons.

The Chinese delegation is pleased to note that all parties are in favour of the early conclusion of a good CTBT this year. We have to admit that the timing and quality of the treaty are both important. On the other hand, they may be in some way contradictory to each other. This in effect is a contradiction between political will and reality. Nevertheless, it is not a contradiction which cannot be resolved. But in order to resolve this

(Mr. Sha, China)

contradiction, one must recognize that reality. It is sometimes necessary - and even unavoidable - to chant slogans or make strong appeals. However, in our view, it is a little late at this stage for that kind of thing. It would be even more shabby if the real intention is to divert people's attention in order to make sure that "what is mine is mine, and what is yours is negotiable". The reality we are faced with at present is this: although we have already settled a large number of issues, there are still quite a few political and technical issues that have yet to be resolved. As the CTBT will have a long-term bearing on international peace and security, we are against wrapping up these issues in a simplistic, hasty manner for the sake of mere political expediency. Rather, we would like to see them settled with a realistic and serious attitude. Anyone who misinterprets this position as being "negative" to the negotiations would be doing so either out of ignorance or with ulterior political motivation. The Chinese delegation maintains that, in order to resolve all the remaining issues, we need to recognize one another's legitimate concerns and, on that basis, show sufficient flexibility to work out the necessary compromises. Any attempt to make use of one's superiority in certain areas to seek unilateral advantage from the treaty is to court failure, leading the negotiations down towards a dead end. I would like to take this opportunity to point out that China is willing to compromise on some issues, but this cannot be done on a unilateral basis. Under no circumstances will China accept any country imposing its will on others.

The first part of this 1996 CD session is coming to an end. Reviewing the CTB negotiations over the past two years, especially during this part of the CD session, we have every reason to be satisfied with the progress achieved during such a short period of time. All negotiating parties in the past two years have explained their positions, exchanged views and understood each other's concerns. During this part of the CD session, the Iranian and Australian delegations have put forward their clean texts, both of which have absorbed many proposals of other parties and can serve as useful reference material for negotiation. We also expect the working paper of the Chairman of the NTB Ad Hoc Committee to offer valuable reference materials for us, so that we can pursue further our negotiations and reach agreement on the basis of the rolling text. In short, we already have a solid basis for negotiation. As mentioned earlier, there are still some major unresolved questions that will have a direct bearing on the universality and effectiveness of the treaty. We should attach sufficient importance to these questions.

I would now like to explain the position of the Chinese delegation on some of the major issues of the negotiations. First, concerning the scope of the treaty. China is committed to concluding a CTBT which prohibits any nuclear-weapon test explosion at any place and in any environment. Proceeding from this guiding principle, the Chinese delegation proposed at the outset of the negotiations its scope text prohibiting any nuclear-weapon test explosion which releases nuclear energy. The phrase "release of nuclear energy" in the Chinese text was intended to distinguish the scope of the CTBT from that of the PTBT and TTBT and to define the scope of the CTBT with more precise and scientific language. The Chinese delegation has always held that the scope of the CTBT should exclude any threshold.

(Mr. Sha, China)

After two years of negotiations, most countries have reached a common understanding on the phrase "any nuclear-weapon test explosion" in the scope article. That is to say, the future CTBT will without any threshold prohibit any nuclear-weapon test explosion. In view of this understanding, and for the purpose of accelerating the pace of our negotiations, China now decides to withdraw the phrase "release of nuclear energy" from its proposed text.

There are still some outstanding issues in the scope article which remain to be settled. It is the sincere hope of the Chinese delegation that all sides will make an effort, in a spirit of mutual understanding and mutual accommodation, in order to find proper solutions to these issues.

Second, concerning peaceful nuclear explosions. The Chinese delegation has noticed that on this important matter of principle there exist divergences. Any disarmament or arms control treaty should not hinder the development and application of science and technology for peaceful purposes. This is an important matter of principle. Therefore, it would be incorrect if the CTBT should ban PNEs. It may be due to the same reason that both the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the NPT contain clear-cut provisions of principle permitting PNEs. As a populous developing country with insufficient per capita energy and mineral resources, China cannot abandon forever any promising and potentially useful technology that may be suited to its economic needs. China fully shares the concern over the possible misuse of PNEs. However, we think that this issue can be resolved by establishing a strict application and approval procedure and an effective international on-site monitoring mechanism for the whole process of PNEs.

Third, concerning entry into force. The Chinese delegation holds that the CTBT has two main objectives: to promote nuclear disarmament and to prevent nuclear proliferation. These two objectives are closely linked and equally important, and neither should be overemphasized at the expense of the other. Undermining either objective may affect the realization of the other. The accession of all nuclear-capable States to the treaty is the legal guarantee for the realization of the above-mentioned objectives. Therefore we support the formula whereby the CTBT shall enter into force after the deposit of instruments of ratification by all nuclear-capable States, as specified in a relevant IAEA list. As for the simple formula of a waiver of EIF requirements, we understand the good intention of the proponents to ensure the early entry into force of the treaty. However, this would put the cart before the horse and would not be conducive to the realization of the main objectives of the treaty. I wish to stress that, although the ratification of the treaty by the five nuclear-weapon States may be a prerequisite for the entry into force of the treaty, we definitely cannot agree to confining the conditions for the entry into force of the treaty only to ratification by the five. For it is inappropriate, from the point of view of political equality, to single out the five nuclear-weapon States. This can be interpreted as a kind of political discrimination. More importantly, this would deviate from the objectives of the treaty.

Fourth, concerning the trigger mechanism for on-site inspection. The Chinese delegation maintains that the international monitoring system under the supervision of the treaty organization, representing all States parties

(Mr. Sha, China)

and providing services to all States parties, is relatively objective and just. In comparison, national technical means are controlled and used by individual States parties or small groups of such parties. If NTMs are incorporated into the international verification system or used for triggering OSIs, it would inevitably put most of the States parties, developing countries in particular, in an extremely unequal position, because of the selectivity and subjectivity that are inherent in the use of such means. This is obviously unreasonable and unjustifiable. Given the past lessons in this connection, the Chinese delegation firmly believes that it is necessary to prevent certain countries from taking advantage of their superior NTMs to harass and discredit the developing countries frequently with dubious information and even infringe upon their legitimate security interests. Experience has shown that intelligence information, claimed to be "reliable" has often proved to be most unreliable. Using this kind of information to trigger OSIs is unacceptable and abhorrent.

The Chinese delegation is of the view that after two years of negotiation, the direction which a final solution to the basis of an OSI request will take has become clear. That is, a request for an OSI can be based only on monitoring data from the IMS. Specifically speaking, OSIs should be directed at ambiguous events detected by the IMS and located by the IDC. So long as the above-mentioned requirements are met, both the data contained in the IDC's Standard Screened Events Bulletin (SSEB) and the raw data from the IMS can be used to trigger an OSI. Only in such a way can we ensure equality between States parties under the treaty and the objectivity and justice of the international verification mechanism contained therein.

The Executive Council, as a broadly representative body, should exercise supervision over OSIs throughout the process. As a first step, the Council should consider and approve the request for an OSI by a two-thirds majority of all its members, namely by a "green light" procedure. This procedure should apply to both the first and the second phases of OSIs. It is our view that triggering OSIs through an automatic or simplified procedure will make OSIs vulnerable to possible abuse, which is the reason why China, together with many other countries opposes this idea. On the other hand, if the requesting State party can put forward, in an open manner, verifiable and convincing evidence in its request for an OSI, it should not have any unnecessary worry about not obtaining a two-thirds majority of the Council members for approval of this "reasonable request".

Fifth, concerning the conduct of OSIs. As is known to all, OSIs and the IMS constitute the two cornerstones of the international verification system of the CTBT. IMS technologies are all remote sensing and detection technologies, while OSI activities may affect the normal operation and normal security of States parties. Therefore it is quite natural for all sides to attach particular importance to OSIs.

The Chinese delegation is of the view that, while fully recognizing the importance and necessity of the OSI mechanism, we should also note that the purpose of OSIs is to clarify ambiguous events detected in the territories of the inspected States parties. Therefore it is inappropriate to prejudge the inspected State as a "violator" before the result of the inspection endorsed

(Mr. Sha, China)

by the Council. In this connection, we cannot regard OSIs as a punitive measure against the inspected State party. The inspection team should strictly abide by the mandate approved by the Council and respect the sovereign rights of the inspected State party. The inspected State party is obliged to provide the necessary assistance to the inspection team to ensure the smooth and effective conduct of the inspection.

During the OSI process, necessary measures should be taken to protect the legitimate security concerns of the inspected State party and to prevent nuclear proliferation. The inspected State party, if it deems that some of the activities proposed by the inspection team may affect its legitimate security interests has the right to impose different degrees of restrictions on the activities of the inspection team and propose alternative measures to demonstrate its compliance with the treaty. The access regime under negotiation in Working Group 1 is an important issue which will have a direct bearing on the effectiveness of the verification regime and the national security of all States parties. The Chinese delegation is ready to join efforts with other delegations to establish a good verification regime for the treaty.

Sixth, concerning the international monitoring system. Thanks to joint efforts by all sides, the IMS is now almost in its final shape. The Chinese delegation is satisfied with and encouraged by the work done in this respect. We are ready to work together with other delegations to finalize our work on a complete IMS plan at an early date. On the question of radionuclide monitoring, the Chinese experts, after carefully studying the proposals of other countries, concluded that it is not cost-effective to include noble gas monitoring into the radionuclide monitoring network. The Chinese delegation is reviewing its position on such remaining issues as satellite images and satellite and EMP monitoring, taking into account the discussions held in the past two years.

I wish to point out that, politically speaking, the IMS as currently designed gives concrete expression to the principle of equality among all States parties, nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike. Technically speaking, the IMS is based on the principle of uniform global coverage and a uniform detection threshold. In other words, it provides equal and balanced monitoring in all regions and in all States parties. This principle, which has guided the design of the IMS, cannot be renegotiated. As a matter of fact, with the IMS as currently designed, China's nuclear test site is subject to a monitoring intensity higher than the global average. This is a fact recognized by the IMS expert group. Under such circumstances, further enhancing the detection level for China's test site is excessive and unacceptable.

Since the Chinese Government decided to participate in the CTBT negotiations more than two years ago, the Chinese delegation has been participating in a positive, serious and responsible manner. It has made due effort and contributed to the progress of the negotiations. The Chinese delegation will continue work towards the conclusion of a good CTBT within 1996.

(Mr. Sha, China)

Before concluding my statement I wish to make the following comment. Some delegations in their statements have expressed their concern about the nuclear tests conducted by China. Our Government has a very clear position on this issue. As it is known to all already, I do not need to repeat it here. However, I do wish to take this opportunity to point out that there is no ground to feel such concern about China's nuclear tests.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of China for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Mongolia, Ambassador Yumjav.

Mr. YUMJAV (Mongolia) At the outset, Mr. President, I should like to express the warm congratulations of my delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at this crucial stage of our negotiations. My delegation is confident that your able guidance and experience will play an important role in speeding up our negotiations. I would also like to express my deep appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Ramaker of the Netherlands, and Ambassador U Aye of Myanmar for their tremendous efforts and commendable contribution to the CD work.

I wish to take this opportunity to warmly welcome our new colleagues who have recently joined us - Mr. President, you and the distinguished Ambassadors of Cuba and Kenya. We look forward to close cooperation with them all.

My delegation welcomes His Excellency Sardar Aseff Ahmed Ali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, for his important statement and expresses its appreciation for the contribution made by Pakistan to the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

My delegation would also like to express its deep appreciation to Ambassador Ramaker from the Netherlands, Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, as well as Ambassador Berdennikov of the Russian Federation and Ambassador Zahran of Egypt, Chairmen of Working Groups 1 and 2 respectively, for their considerable efforts and contributions to the ongoing negotiations on a CTBT.

More than two years ago we set ourselves a challenging goal to negotiate on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty and started in earnest to work for this purpose. My delegation is encouraged by the significant progress made in the CTBT negotiations during this period. We have now reached a crucial and decisive stage of the negotiations for completing a CTBT in the time-frame set by the decision of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and reaffirmed by United Nations General Assembly consensus resolution 50/65. In this regard my delegation fully supports the appeal made by many delegations to finalize our negotiations as soon as possible in 1996 in order to submit the treaty text to the fifty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly for its approval.

The comprehensive test-ban treaty is indeed the most important task of the Conference for this year. It is in this context that my delegation wishes to quote the Secretary-General of the United Nations: "Today you have begun a race against time. The conclusion of the treaty cannot be deferred any

(Mr. Yumjav, Mongolia)

longer. It must be concluded this year. Otherwise a severe blow will be dealt to the nuxlear and non-proliferation regime, and thereby to peace and security as a whole". Mongolia will welcome any initiative that will contribute to speeding up our work. In this spirit, we highly appreciate the contributions of the Iranian and Australian delegations to the ongoing negotiations. Doubtless, the two texts presented by the above-mentioned delegations will help us reach agreement on a number of outstanding issues.

Despite the considerable progress that the CTBT negotiations have made so far, much more remains to be done. Political decisions are urgently called for on many outstanding issues such as the treaty's scope, entry into force, verification, on-site inspection, the organization and its overall funding, etc. At this crucial stage of our negotiations, my delegation would like to reiterate its position on some of these vital issues involved in our negotiations.

In the view of my delegation, scope is one of the fundamental issues of the CTBT. Mongolia is for a true-zero-yield CTBT. We consider that the CTBT should be comprehensive and non-discriminatory in its scope and it should ban all nuclear tests by all States, in all environments and for all time. The treaty should attract universal adherence and be multilaterally and effectively verifiable. In other words this treaty should cover all nuclear-weapon tests or any other nuclear explosion for any purposes, be it military, peaceful or any other. We therefore support the formula on scope proposed by the Australian delegation contained in its model treaty text. We believe that this formula could serve as a good basis for further negotiations and welcome the emerging convergence of views around it.

With regard to the entry into force of the treaty the time has come to decide among the various options contained in the "rolling text". My delegation is of the view that two important factors should be taken into consideration in this respect. Firstly, entry into force should not be so complicated that it might delay the process of entry into force of the treaty. Secondly, it is important that all nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-capable States should ratify the treaty.

My delegation considers that the credibility of the CTBT will to a great extent depend on its verification regime. Therefore, the future verification system should be efficient and cost-effective. It should be equipped with an efficient monitoring capability. The consultation and clarification process would be an important part of the verification regime.

We stand for a verification system which would guarantee equal access to all States parties to the treaty. As far as its components are concerned, my delegation believes that the international monitoring system may initially be composed of the seismic, radionuclide, hydroacoustic and infrasound technologies, as well as on-site inspection. At the same time, we think that the treaty should benefit from the advances in science and technology of the future.

(Mr. Yumjav, Mongolia)

A seismic monitoring network should stand at the core of such a system. I'm pleased to note that my Government has already committed to the primary network one seismic station on Mongolian territory. Now we are considering the technical possibility of ensuring its data communication with the international data centre as part of our own contribution to the ongoing GSETT-3. My country is also interested in having other stations in the seismic network of auxiliary stations as well as other monitoring networks.

As for on-site inspection, we think that an OSI should be a very rare measure in the CTBT, taken only after exhausting all other possible steps. Its task should be to clarify any question concerning possible non-compliance with the basic obligations of the treaty. An OSI should be conducted in an effective, timely and least intrusive manner.

My delegation shares the position of many other delegations that an OSI should be an instrument to monitor only the CTBT. In this regard, it is also important that the OSI regime should provide a balance between deterrence and protection of legitimate national interests. In our view, only a State party has the right to request an OSI and the information from the international monitoring system would be sufficient to trigger a request. It is well known that the issues related to on-site inspection were comprehensively discussed during the negotiations on the Chemical Weapons Convention and we believe that the CTBT could benefit from that precedent.

My delegation attaches great importance to the issues concerning a future CTBT organization. We are in favour of a small, but independent organization which could maintain close cooperation with IAEA. It is important that the CTBT organization benefits from the experience of the Agency in the verification field.

With regard to the composition of the Executive Council, we think that for reasons of cost-effectiveness, such a body should be relatively small but fully representative and efficient. It is essential that the principles of equality, equitable geographical distribution and system of rotation should be maintained in the Executive Council.

We appreciate the efforts made by Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi, as Friend of the Chair on the Executive Council, to find a reasonable solution to this issue.

Since we are negotiating a comprehensive and non-discriminatory treaty, our position is that every State party should have the right to serve on the Executive Council. Therefore, we believe that no permanent seat would be allowed and no State party would be excluded from holding a seat on the Executive Council. As for the specific criteria and modalities to be applied to membership in the Executive Council, my delegation is of the view that a formula should be found to ensure a balance between political and technical considerations.

Let me also make a few observations on some other issues. Mongolia welcomes the many positive developments in the field of nuclear disarmament, in particular, important agreements on deep reductions of nuclear arsenals

(Mr. Yumjav, Mongolia)

between the United States of America and the Russian Federation, as well as the recent steps taken by France. However, systematic and progressive efforts need to be taken by the international community to reach the ultimate goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons. In this context, my delegation shares the concern of many delegations that nuclear disarmament should be negotiated at the Conference on Disarmament within a specific time-frame by establishing an ad hoc committee. Therefore, my delegation fully subscribes to the joint statement of the Group of 21 of 23 January 1996 as well as the draft decision tabled by the Group on 14 March 1996 in this respect.

It is well known that four years ago Mongolia declared its territory a nuclear-weapon-free zone, which was welcomed by all nuclear-weapon States and the Non-Aligned Movement. We are convinced that the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world will enhance global and regional peace and security. In this spirit, my delegation warmly welcomes the signing of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone by ASEAN and other South-East Asian countries. We also note with satisfaction the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (the Pelindaba Treaty) which will be opened for signature at the beginning of April. It is encouraging to note that a few days ago France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America signed the three protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga. My delegation welcomes this positive step.

Another issue which has bedevilled the Conference for years is the question of expansion of the CD. This issue has to be addressed fairly and without any further delay. Mongolia supports the O'Sullivan package and stands for the immediate admission of the 23 countries listed therein. Therefore, my delegation is for the earliest possible implementation of the CD decision of 21 September 1995 contained in document CD/1356.

At this final and decisive stage of our negotiations, it is crucial that all delegations display political will and demonstrate flexibility and a spirit of compromise to achieve our common goal which is to conclude a CTBT as soon as possible.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Mongolia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

If not, I should now like to draw your attention to the proposal made by the Group of 21 as contained in document CD/1388. The consultations I have held so far on this proposal indicate that it does not command consensus at this stage. And, therefore, I intend to continue consultations during the inter-sessional period with a view to identifying a basis for compromise on how to address the issue of nuclear disarmament in the Conference.

On this question, Brazil and Egypt have asked for the floor. I give the floor to Ambassador Lafer of Brazil.

Mr. LAFER (Brazil): I will now make a statement in my capacity as Coordinator of the Group of 21.

The Group of 21 has persistently pressed for commencement of negotiations in the CD on nuclear disarmament, an objective which has been accorded the highest priority by the international community.

Since the beginning of the current part of the CD's session, the Group of 21 has stated its position on the matter by means of statements made in the plenary sessions of 23 January 1996 and 14 March 1996. On the latter occasion it put a decision before the Conference for adoption (CD/1388), through which the Conference would establish, before the end of the first part of its 1996 session, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

The Group of 21 deeply regrets that consultations held on this issue by the President did not yield positive results and consequently that the Conference is not in a position to adopt such a decision at this time. It deplores the refusal by certain member States of the CD to negotiate on the issue of nuclear disarmament in the Conference, which is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body.

The Group of 21 requests this issue to remain under active consideration in the Presidential agenda, and reiterates its resolve to work assiduously towards ridding our planet of the threat of nuclear weapons in the same manner as the international community has dealt with other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt): It gives me pleasure to ask for the floor under the able and skilful presidency of a faithful son of Africa, Ambassador Abuah of Nigeria. With his known skills and wide diplomatic experience, the CD will conclude constructive and businesslike deliberations of the first part of the 1996 CD session. As my delegation made it clear to your predecessors, Ambassadors Aye of Myanmar and Ramaker of the Netherlands, to whom I express my appreciation for their contributions in performing the functions of the CD presidency, I pledge to you my full support and cooperation.

I would like first of all to endorse completely the statement made by Ambassador Celso Lafer of Brazil on behalf of the Group of 21 on nuclear disarmament, and I wish you all success in continuing consultations on this issue, Mr. President, in the inter-sessional period, and thank you for having given us an opportunity to discuss this matter which is very important to all of us. The formal proposal made by the Group of 21 in the CD on 14 March 1996 to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to conduct negotiations on this issue, to which we attribute the utmost priority, is reflected in document CD/1388. We sincerely hope that in the very near future we will be able to go beyond discussions on form and engage in serious negotiations on the substance of that matter.

If Egypt, together with the other members of the Group of 21, does not let an occasion go by without raising the question of nuclear disarmament, it is simply because this issue deserves more attention than it has so far been given. While we recognize and appreciate the concrete efforts made by some

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

of the nuclear-weapon States, as well as the positive commitments they have undertaken in this regard, we also consider that it is only when the total elimination of nuclear weapons is achieved that this issue will be removed from the international disarmament agenda. To achieve this objective, much work still needs to be done and it is our view that it should be done here in the CD.

All of us here in this Council chamber have supported the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, but some of us are clearly in more of a hurry than others. We are in a hurry. Why? Because we believe that conditions are finally propitious for us to rid the world of nuclear weapons in a time-bound frame. We are also in a hurry because we are well aware of the fact that the road to nuclear disarmament will be a long and difficult one and that the later we embark upon the road, the longer we will have to live with the threat of nuclear weapons looming over us. Despite assurances to the contrary, this threat is very real, for if it did not exist, nuclear weapons, which are supposedly a deterrent, would have no raison d'être.

We have also to free ourselves from fear - fear of the threat of nuclear weapons - the most devastating of all types of weapons. How to address the dangers to humanity and to the environment from the continuous presence of nuclear weapons and unsafeguarded nuclear reactors like the disaster which we witnessed in Chernobyl? We heard a week ago from the Foreign Minister of Ukraine how many victims, how many sacrifices affecting human beings and the environment. The same fear today is in Egypt and in the Middle East. We are living in a nightmare which is a result of the radiation leaks from the Dimona reactor in Israel, as a result of earthquakes which hit the region in recent years.

Biological weapons have been dealt with multilaterally, and multilateral negotiations are still under way to provide the BWC with a verification mechanism in order to ensure compliance with its provisions. Chemical weapons have also been dealt with multilaterally in this very chamber. We are therefore not convinced of the wisdom behind the decision taken by some nuclear-weapon States that nuclear weapons are to be handled differently and exclusively by those who officially possess them. If nuclear disarmament is to be the private business of only the five nuclear-weapon States, what is to happen to those nuclear weapons which might be in the possession of other States which are not legally bound not to possess them? By the same token, we are concerned because of the lack of implementation of article VI of the NPT, as we mentioned and as we voiced in the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995. That treaty stipulated when it was signed in 1968 that the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament will take place at an early date. This objective has not been attained after 28 years from the date of the signing of the NPT. I repeat: "at an early date".

I do not wish to repeat here the arguments we have repeatedly made in connection with the matter of nuclear disarmament since these are well known to all of us. I wish only to make it very clear and to reiterate strongly Egypt's request that an independent item - a separate item - on nuclear disarmament be included on the CD agenda, and that an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament be established in the CD to commence negotiations on

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

nuclear disarmament immediately following the conclusion of the negotiations on the CTBT. This ad hoc committee could at the very outset, and as a first step, start negotiations on the issue of banning the production of fissile materials for military purposes, which we regard as a nuclear disarmament issue. Simultaneously, consultations in the framework of the proposed ad hoc committee would be held to formulate a detailed mandate laying out a number of other specific time-bound frames of nuclear disarmament for the future work of that ad hoc committee.

Unlike others, we do not believe that the CD is spending too much time on nuclear issues. We believe that it is merely catching up with all the time it has lost in the past, virtually ignoring nuclear issues or paying little more than lip-service to them. We look forward to all nuclear items being ultimately dropped from the CD agenda, but this will only happen when the overwhelming and virtually unanimous ambition of the international community for true nuclear disarmament has been attained.

Before concluding, I would like to express our satisfaction at the signing in Fiji on 25 March by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of the three protocols to the Rarotonga Treaty on the South Pacific nuclear-weapon-free zone, another important step towards the full implementation of that Treaty. We were happy also at the signing of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone. Another step is coming in the pipeline in efforts towards non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. That will be the signing in Cairo on 11 April, next month, of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty, to which all five nuclear-weapon States have been invited.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Zahran, the distinguished representative of Egypt, for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor on this? That does not seem to be the case. We shall, of course, bear in mind the comments made on this question and carry forth the consultations which will, accordingly, be held inter-sessionally.

I should now like to turn to the issue of expansion of membership of the Conference. As you are aware, the decision taken by the Conference in document CD/1356 requires that "the Conference will review the situation following the presentation of progress reports by the President on ongoing consultations at the end of each part of its annual session". As you know, both my predecessors, Ambassador Aye of Myanmar and Ambassador Ramaker of the Netherlands, conducted intensive consultations on the issue and they reported to the Conference on the results thereon at the 725th and 729th plenary meetings respectively. For my part, I have continued these consultations, building on the efforts of my predecessors, with a view to an early resolution of this long-outstanding issue. At this stage, it is my duty to report that it is not possible to implement the decision on expansion.

(The President)

However, it goes without saying that I will make full use of the inter-sessional period to further explore ways and means of an early implementation of this decision.

I have on my list of speakers on this question the representative of Chile, Ambassador Berguño.

Mr. BERGUÑO (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on your presidency and your very able leadership of our work, and to thank you for the courtesy and concern that you have shown vis-à-vis the delegations of the countries in the Group of 23, continuing thereby the tradition of your predecessors. The Group has entrusted me with the task of making a brief statement on the part of your report that refers to the application of decision CD/1356; we reserve the right to raise this matter again at the appropriate time.

For my part, before reading out the statement, I would like to associate myself with statements made today about the signing of the protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga by three nuclear countries, and the statements made by the representatives of Austria (who referred to the recent words of the United Nations Secretary-General), Brazil, the Czech Republic and Mongolia concerning the question of expansion. I also wish to thank you for the information you provided that consultations on this subject will continue during the inter-sessional period and to express regret that it was not possible to have a more thorough debate in plenary. I will now read out the statement by the Group of 23 in English.

(continued in English)

I would like to state the following on behalf of Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Finland, Iraq, Israel, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe. We note the report of the President of the Conference on Disarmament recognizing that there has been no progress on the implementation of decision CD/1356. We strongly regret this outcome and urge again the Conference on Disarmament to urgently resolve this matter. We also believe that the Conference is not acting within the spirit of its own decision CD/1356 and of General Assembly resolution 50/72 C. In its decision adopted on 21 September 1995, the CD finally adopted the report of the Special Coordinator for membership and the recommended composition attached to it. At the time of its adoption, the statement made on that occasion by all CD members made it clear that the Conference as a whole was prepared to accept our 23 countries as new members forthwith. A solution is needed without further delay.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Chile for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Are there any other speakers on this? That's not the case.

Today's plenary meeting is the last during this part of the session. During this period, we were able to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on a

(The President)

Nuclear Test Ban, under which the Conference is conducting the important negotiations for the comprehensive test-ban treaty. We also appointed the Special Coordinator on the agenda in the person of Ambassador Meghlaoui of Algeria.

We have worked very hard during this session. I wish to pay tribute to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, Ambassador Ramaker of the Netherlands, for his untiring efforts and able guidance of the Committee. Equally deserving recognition are Ambassadors Berdennikov of the Russian Federation and Zahran of Egypt, Chairmen of Working Groups 1 and 2 respectively. They, and the many Friends of the Chair, spare no effort to ensure that progress is made in our negotiations.

In spite of our collective efforts, there is still a long way to go in the negotiations for the CTBT. The inter-sessional period provides the opportunity to reflect on the knotty problems still to be solved. I urge all delegations to use the period to seek instructions that will make possible the successful conclusion of our negotiations by the end of the second session. We are so close to another historic achievement for CD. We should not miss this opportunity.

I wish to note that the Special Coordinator on the agenda is holding important consultations. It is my expectation that he will report to the Conference on the progress of his consultations. We should continue to extend to him the necessary cooperation to ensure the success of his assignment.

The secretariat has circulated, at my request, a tentative timetable of meetings for the first week of the second part of the 1996 session. This timetable was prepared in consultation with the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban and is, as usual, merely indicative and subject to change if necessary. In this respect I would draw your attention to the fact that, as Thursday 16 May is a holiday and the Palais des Nations will be closed, the plenary meeting has been rescheduled for Tuesday 14 May. May I assume that the timetable is acceptable?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: At the request of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, I should like to inform delegations that immediately after this plenary, a meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee will take place. This, in turn, will be followed by a meeting of the Friend of the Chair on on-site inspection.

As agreed, the next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday 14 May 1996 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.